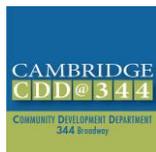


City of Cambridge
Community Development Department

Zoning Considerations Preview

Jeff Roberts, Director of Zoning and Development
Presentation to Climate Resilience Zoning Task Force
July 31, 2019





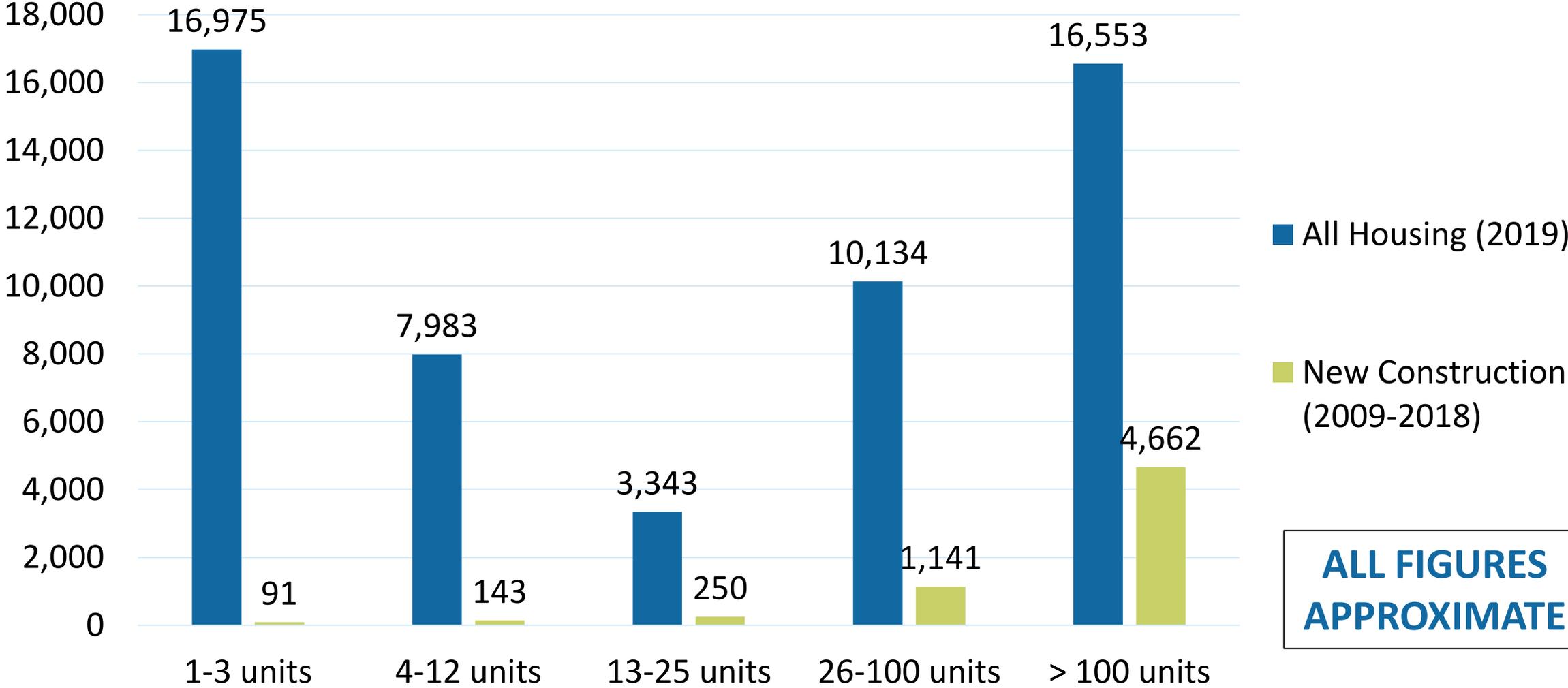
Zoning: Things to Know Before Trying



Zoning Doesn't "Make" Anything

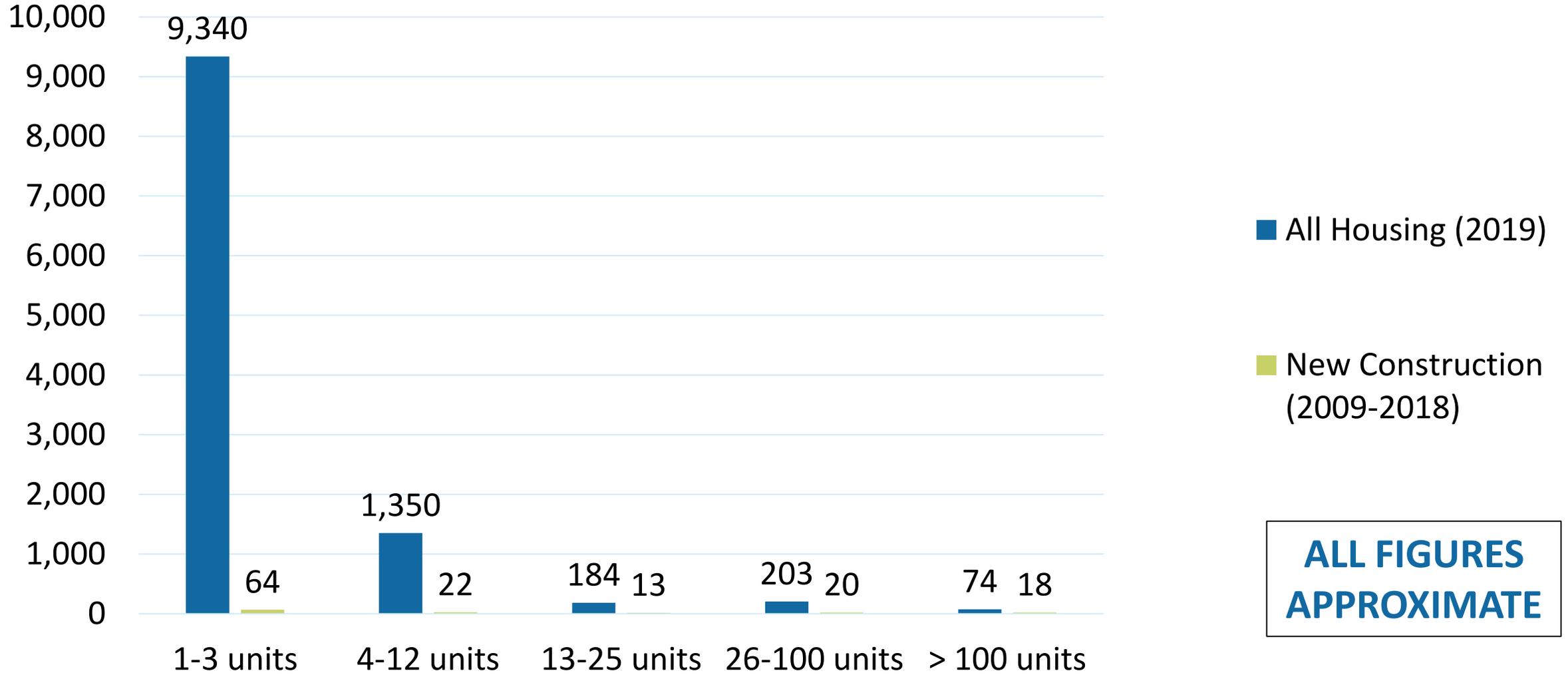
- There is always an existing condition and a new condition. **Zoning protects existing conditions and regulates changes.**
- Property owners decide what changes to make. **Zoning (along with many factors beyond our control) affects the value of the proposed condition and the cost of making the change.**
- **Most often, change doesn't happen.** Sometimes the new condition is much more valuable than the existing and change will happen. If the cost of change is high, the existing condition is likely to remain.

Housing Units by Building Size



**ALL FIGURES
APPROXIMATE**

Housing Developments by Building Size



**ALL FIGURES
APPROXIMATE**



Zoning Does Some Things Better Than Others

“Degree of Difficulty”

Easier	Specific, quantifiable standards that are easy to measure and don't change
A bit tricky	Performance-based standards that are harder to measure but still measurable and related to physical design
Tough	Qualitative standards that require review, subjective interpretation and judgment
Very hard	Standards for ongoing activity or maintenance of characteristics that tend to change over time

Zoning Does Some Things Better Than Others

Examples at Varying Scales, Locations

All projects	Dimensional standards for height, setbacks, parking, &c. (Article 5.000 and Special Standards)
25,000 SF+	Green Building Requirements (Section 22.20)
Flood plain	Flood Plain Overlay District Standards (Section 20.70)
50,000 SF+ (& others)	Project Review procedures and Urban Design Objectives (Article 19.000)
Limited examples	Landscape maintenance, operational standards

Rule 1: Must Follow All Rules

Potential Overlap with Current Zoning Standards

Open Space Requirements	Residential uses citywide have minimum private open space; neighborhood districts have minimum permeable open space (Section 5.22) Open space and permeability required for all uses in Alewife (Section 20.90) Public open space required in many major development areas (Articles 13, 14, 15)
Planting Requirements	Landscaping and trees required for surface parking lots (Section 6.48) Green area setbacks required in Alewife (Section 20.90) and some other areas Tree planting required in Parkway Overlay District (Section 20.60)
“Green Relief”	Exemptions/incentives for “functional” (planted) green roof area, exterior wall insulation, and sun-shading devices (Sections 22.30, 22.40, 22.50)
Environmental Standards	Green Building Requirements (Section 22.20) Flood Plain Overlay District Standards (Section 20.70) Urban Design Objectives re: environment, infrastructure (Sections 19.33, 19.34)

Rule 1: Must Follow All Rules

Potential Tension with Current Zoning Standards (and others)

Basement Uses	Basement floor area not limited in single-family and two-family dwellings, waivable by special permit otherwise (Article 2.000) Special permit relief for basement apartments in some areas, with required flood impact review (Section 20.600)
Shading	Covered structures (e.g., porches, canopies) limited by floor area and setback requirements (Articles 2.000, 5.000)
Height	Height limits can disincentivize elevating uses (Article 5.000, special districts)
Parking and Pathways	Requirements for number of parking spaces, dimensions and width of drive aisles, access for bicycle parking all require paved surface (Article 6.000) Accessibility standards require paved surface (ADA, building code)
Urban Design	Urban Design Objectives re: conformance with established patterns, pedestrian and bicycle friendliness, historic preservation (Sections 19.31, 19.32, 19.35)



Thank You